

Bedford, Ohio

March 28, 2011

Community Ward Meeting for Wards 1 & 2 was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, March 28, 2011. Mayor Pocek called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Daniel Pocek, Warner Batten, Stan Koci, Marilyn Zolata, Paula Mizesak, Don Saunders. Also Present: Clerk of Council Pro-Tem Michelle Gnoddie. Administration: City Manager Henry Angelo, Finance Director Frank Gambosi, Service Director Clint Bellar, Police Chief Greg Duber, Recreation Director Randy Lewis, Economic Development Director Mike Mallis, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Building Commissioner Phil Seyboldt.

Mayor Pocek welcomed all residents in attendance tonight. Mayor Pocek thanked the citizens for the support shown the City of Bedford in November 2009 with the passage of the Safety Forces Levy. It is currently in the news what is happening with the State budget and what is projected to happen with local government funding. It is not the intention of the City to go back to the taxpayers to deal with the State budget cuts. It is projected the City of Bedford will lose approximately \$900,000 over the next two years. The safety forces levy has kept us a little better than even. The City will maintain the services as best as possible to make Bedford a great place to live.

Regarding SB 5, Mayor Pocek stated that one of things the City always faced when going into arbitration was the City has always been at the disadvantage. The arbitrators usually favor the other side. The rules have to be changed to make it more of an independent arbitrator. What SB 5 did is to put the power to determine these labor issues in the hands of the local City Council. Mayor Pocek trusts the wisdom and judgment of the current Administration and Council and this Council would do the right thing. With other Councils and local governments, this could become a political issue. The way arbitration currently works, if the City offers a wage increase of one percent and the union wants a three percent wage increase, the arbitrator decides one or the other. It usually goes against the City. The final bill is supposed to be voted on soon.

Councilman Batten reported the following for Ward 1:

Sewers on Tudor, Thames and Greencroft were cleaned last week.

There are approximately 20 locust trees on Jackson Street. He is in the process of going to every house and doing a survey. The survey should be done in a couple weeks and he will schedule a meeting with the Service Director and Tree Board. All Jackson Street residents will be notified of the outcome.

Signs were put up today on Rockside Road. Work will begin on Rockside Road next week and will be completed sometime in July. The work is being done between Tim Lally Chevrolet and Northfield Road. Traffic will be maintained one lane for each direction. The intersection of Rockside and Center Road is also to be worked on.

Work began today on the Broadway Avenue culvert. Traffic will be maintained on Broadway one lane for each direction. This job should be finished in July.

A new sewer will be installed sometime this summer on Grand from Bexley/Southwick to Center Road. There will also be a new water line and new street.

Councilman Koci reported the following for Ward 2:

New streets in Ward 2 this year were Wellmon and Archer.

A new waterline was installed on Solon. There are still some items to be finished on Solon Road when the weather improves.

Storm sewer cleanouts are currently being done. Recently there has been a lot of snow and rain that caused flooding in many basements.

The city has a new water bill and informational insert, which should help with communication due to the loss of our weekly newspapers.

Two city houses for sale (Heather and Darlington) that the City bought for \$1 from HUD.

Commended the Police Department on the community policing meeting last week at Ellenwood.

Code Red message was sent out to residents advising them of the ward meeting. Code Red sign-up sheets are available. Police Department can send messages to the whole city, a street, a ward, or a certain area. We are also taking email addresses for email notifications.

Police Department watching for kids walking in the street. The schools make announcements to let the kids know not to do it.

We are concerned with garbage out early and trash cans left out too long. We currently are warning residents but we will eventually start issuing citations.

Cars are not to be parked on front lawns and will be ticketed.

City Manager Hank Angelo showed a PowerPoint presentation highlighting all city departments.

Police Department: Police Department is beginning to host regular meetings in an effort to hear the public's thoughts and concerns. Topics that were brought up at the meeting last week were animals not on a leash and running at large, animal defecation, and semi-trucks unloading cars on Broadway and Rockside. The police department is also visiting the stores in downtown and getting input from business owners and customers.

Building Department: Building Department oversees the home rehabilitation program. The City was successful in obtaining two grants to assist in the program. We have been awarded grants in the amounts of \$500,000 and \$100,000. The \$500,000 grant involved the renovation of homes within the Presidential District being 775 Lincoln and 166 Woodrow. The \$100,000 grant was used for the renovation of 97 Flora. The City is going to apply for a third round of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds (NSP III). Other homes the city has fixed up and are for sale are on Belle, West Grace, West Glendale, Washington, and two on Lincoln. Two other homes for sale are on Heather and Darlington. These are being sold as is.

The Building Department continues to keep track and address the problem with vacant homes. There are 364 total foreclosures, but only 65 are vacant.

New Website: Mike Mallis showed the audience the workings of the new website [www.bedfordoh.gov](http://www.bedfordoh.gov). City staff is currently working on building their department webpages. Anticipated launch date end of April. City staff will be able to update the website in-house so it is always current. Special features include an emergency notification message box, e-news sign-up, calendar, and latest news to improve community outreach.

New Water Bill: This is another avenue for getting information out to the residents. On the water bill, there is a community message box. On the back of the bill is a phone listing, ways to pay the bill, and how to find a water leak in your house. Non-profit organizations could insert a flyer in the water bill mailing. There is a cost involved because the City cannot absorb the costs.

Presidential District Reconstruction and Enhancement Project: The City was one of only two cities in the county to be awarded a \$276,000 grant through Cuyahoga County's CDBG program. The total project cost was approximately \$300,000. It involved the resurfacing of Woodrow and Adams Street last year and the installation of welcome banners and historic street signs this spring. The purpose is to brand this part of the City.

Rockside Road Reconstruction: The City will not accept the project that was done last year. Karvo Construction will be back out and stand behind their work. It is a four month project with three sections: Broadway to Center, Center to Northfield and Northfield to Bartlett. The problem with the work not being done on the intersection of Center & Rockside was subsurface. The concrete below was very bad and that is one of the reasons given for breaking up the schedule that they had last year. The contractor was supposed to go all the way through Bedford last year.

Broadway Culvert Repair: The City was awarded a \$600,000 grant to replace the deteriorated culvert on Broadway near the Subaru and Honda dealerships. Construction began today and will run through July. Traffic will be maintained one lane in both directions.

Railroad Crossing Enhancement Project: This project involves \$750,000 in upgrades to North Park, Willis and Powers. The project is scheduled to take place over three weekends in June because the train has to run Monday through Friday. Roadways will be closed during construction and detours will be posted. South Park and Monroe crossing will be closed.

Recreation Department: Currently preparing an application for a \$35,000 grant to revitalize the Palmetto Tot Lot. We have received this grant previously two times.

Auto Mile District: The City applied for a \$150,000 grant through the County to enhance the Auto Mile District and to brand the Auto Mile. Project would include multiple monuments, digital signs and landscaping.

World Changers: At the end of July, 200-250 young people will be in Bedford working on rehabilitating homes. There are no economic guidelines. It is a question of need. They will do approximately 20 projects in Bedford, Bedford Heights, Walton Hills and Oakwood. The school system has agreed to house all 200 students. They will do projects such as painting, handicap ramp, gutters, steps, roofs and those types of improvements. Applications need to be submitted to be considered for the program. No city funds are involved. The City is accepting donations for the costs of materials. The homeowner would most likely have to contribute to the cost of supplies.

Mayor Pocek opened the meeting to questions from citizens.

Inquiry from audience on what the City is going to do about the flooding on High Street and what is the status of the camera that was never replaced to televise the line. Mr. Angelo responded we would rent one as opposed to buying it again because there was a high maintenance cost. We do need to have the capability, but not on a regular basis, to televise sewers. Mr. Bellar stated there is a minimum of three hours work at \$150.00. When Mr. Bellar gets a full day's work, he will schedule a full eight hour day. Mr. Bellar will add High Street to the scheduling. We need to find out how many people on the street were flooded. The recent night of heavy rain of two inches, 45 houses reported flooding. Mr. Angelo further explained that during certain rains, there will be flooding. Sewers are built on "rain events." The sewer size is based on what is called a "10-year, 25-year, 50-year, or 100 year flood". When that amount of water is coming down, it is not just coming from the sewage system. There are two sets of sewers – a storm sewer and a sanitary sewer. Footer drains are going into the sanitary system. There is excess water coming into the system. Most of the homes in Bedford were built prior to the requirement there has to be a separate footer drain not tied into your sanitary. Further discussion held.

Inquiry from audience if there is a law regarding parking boats in driveways. Mr. Seyboldt responded that recreational vehicles (boats, RV's, etc.) are allowed to be in the driveway if they are behind the front corner of the house. Mr. Seyboldt advised resident to call him when the boat is parked on the property.

Inquiry from audience if garages are supposed to have gutters and downspouts. The neighbor behind his property put gutters and downspouts on his garage and now he is getting water. Mr. Seyboldt responded it depends on whether he is directing the water artificially into the yard or whether the water would run there even if he didn't have a gutter because the property is lower. Mr. Seyboldt advised the resident to contact the Building Department for further assistance.

Question from audience regarding the City's position on rain barrels and if there are tax breaks. Mr. Seyboldt responded that a rain barrel is an artificial retention pond and does not stop water from going into the storm sewer, just slows it down. The federal tax breaks ended last year. Rain barrels are allowed. They have to be sealed/have a lid. Locations of rain barrels have not yet been discussed at the city level. Mr. Seyboldt suggested placing it in back of house to be a good neighbor because they are not ascetically pleasing and could look like garbage cans. Further discussion held.

Question from audience regarding economic development at Meadowbrook Market Square. Mr. Mallis stated the City communicates often to Mr. Goudreau. It is hard to tell a property owner what to do with property when it is violation free and the building looks nice. Target, Tops and CVS still are paying rent to Mr. Goudreau. One lease is up in 2016 and two leases are up in 2018. Mr. Mallis has heard from three major retailers who have an interest in that location. Further discussion held on recent efforts and challenges with marketing the Meadowbrook property.

Mr. Angelo said there have been recent efforts regarding economic development. The City is working with Save-A-Lot about the possibility of coming into Bedford, working with the owners of industrial property at Tinkers Creek Commerce Park, and marketing the five acres of property the city owns on Solon Road.

Resident stated she had problems with sewage back-up. She replaced her sewage line and it was the best \$3,000 she spent to have peace of mind that she would not have a back-up every time it would rain.

Councilman Koci spoke of a program Mayor Pocek and he learned about at the National League of Cities. There is a utility service that has partnered with the National League of Cities where for a small fee of approximately \$4.00 a month, they will protect your sewer lines and come and clean them out. If they need repair, they will be covered for repair for the small monthly fee. Council and the administration need to discuss this further before the City approves.

Inquiry from audience about the state cuts to the local governments. Mayor Pocek replied the city will lose \$900,000 due to cuts in the CAT tax, estate tax and local government fund. The City will figure how to absorb these cuts. Mr. Gambosi stated this \$900,000 will be lost over an eight year period. These are cuts proposed by Governor Kasich and have yet to be approved by the State legislature.

Inquiry from audience about looking into combining services with other cities. Mayor Pocek replied Bedford has been doing this for years. We are in a refuse consortium with four municipalities, seven police departments are part of SEALE (Southeast Area Law Enforcement), and most recently sharing fire services and ladder truck with the City of Maple Heights. Chief Nagy and other Chiefs are in discussion about fire districts. Bedford is also involved with the Economic Prosperity Initiative which involves 16 northeast Ohio counties sharing sources for the purpose of economic development. Further discussion held on shared services.

Resident concerned that when plowing streets, the snow is plowed up along the curbs and blocks the sidewalk at the crosswalks. People cannot get through when they need to cross the street and why is it not being cleared. Mr. Angelo responded there is no one to clear it. The priority is to clear the street. To do what is being suggested would involve hiring additional personnel to shovel that snow.

Mr. Angelo said Bedford does have an ordinance that property owners need to clean their sidewalks. The goal is to educate the residents that they are responsible to shovel. Mr. Angelo does not want to issue citations because it would mostly involve senior citizens.

Resident asked about the bombardier the City used to clean the sidewalks in the 1970's. Mayor Pocek replied the damage outweighed the good. The kids would pull the stakes, residents complained about damage to lawns and snow being plowed back into the drive and apron from the bombardier. Mr. Bellar said it is costly to run the bombardier. They were expensive to maintain and the manpower involved in running the bombardier and fixing the damaged lawns.

Comment made from audience that some residents rake their leaf piles into the street. Mr. Bellar responded there is a littering ordinance specifically for this reason. The police department does enforce. The leaves block inlets and the street will flood.

Comment made about putting information on the City Hall marquee and that is how he knows what is going on.

East Taylor Road resident stated there were 20 pieces of asphalt on his sidewalk from Solon Road. Many of these pieces struck his mailbox. This is very dangerous as the asphalt pieces are thrown from vehicles. The Solon Road was resurfaced about two or three years ago.

Inquiry made on which department should be called if someone does not clean their sidewalk. Mr. Angelo said to contact City Hall. We will attempt to contact the resident that lives there. Most of the time they are people who are renting, senior citizens, or someone who just can't get out there to clean the

sidewalk. Mr. Angelo said he is trying to educate the residents. There is an ordinance, but Mr. Angelo is not in favor of giving out tickets.

Resident stated he will not call when he sees violations. He told of an experience he had with the police department when he called police about someone trying to turn gas back on that was not with Dominion. The suspect was arrested by Bedford Police but apparently Dominion refused to press charges. The resident was not happy that the suspect was not charged. Chief Duber explained that Dominion was the victim of someone trying to steal gas. Since Dominion is the victim, they have to sign the complaint. The resident is not the victim and cannot sign the complaint. The victim has to press charges in order for prosecution.

Suggestion from audience to put information on the water bill insert regarding snow plowers hired to clean driveway and parking lots that they are responsible for clearing snow that they caused to block sidewalks after plowing.

Wellmon Street resident states that after new waterline was installed on Solon Road, he noticed when he uses water on the second floor of his house and he shuts the water off, his pipes are vibrating. He contacted someone to check the water pressure at his house and it is 75 PSI. He was told by a plumber it should be around 50 PSI. He inquired if he needs to install a pressure regulator near the water meter to reduce the pressure. Councilman Batten replied he is fine at 75 PSI. Mr. Angelo said there is probably an air pocket in the line. Mr. Angelo suggests turning the water on in the basement and let it run for a while. Mr. Seyboldt states that the Ohio Plumbing Code does not recommend a pressure reducing valve until 80 PSI. The pressure is not the cause of the pipes rattling and also agrees it is air in the line.

Inquiry from the audience about the program in which juveniles would assist residents in need of leaf collection or snow removal. Chief Duber replied this is the Juvenile Diversion program. First time juvenile offenders go through this program versus Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court. We only supervise them one day a week, on Saturdays, for four hours. We also max out at six or seven juveniles because we cannot put too many kids with one adult supervisor. Seniors call to get on the list for raking leaves and shoveling snow. If there are no calls logged for a week, they will go around the city and pick up litter.

Solon Road resident wanted to discuss the Solon Road project. She stated she appreciated the quick responses from the City with regards to the many problems she experienced with the contractor that did Solon Road. The contractor will be back out soon to finish fixing problems.

Resident reported the swings and other playground equipment at Greencroft Park need fixing. Mr. Lewis responded his department will be out there in the spring and take a look at the park.

Inquiry from audience that if you shovel snow on your sidewalk and someone falls on it, are you liable for that or if you don't shovel the snow and they fall on it, is it an act of God. Mr. Angelo responded he does not know the answer but will check with the Law Director.

Inquiry from audience if the City has considered joining the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. Mr. Angelo responded that NEORSD did talk to the City, but there is no benefit for the City to join. It would cost over \$30 million for Bedford to join NEORSD and Bedford would have to still maintain the system.

Concern at Broadway and eastbound turn lane onto Union, that turn arrow needs to be painted. There is a sign that states right turn only. He travels this street frequently and is constantly getting cut off by vehicles continuing to drive straight. It is also a problem going the other direction on Broadway. The City needs to paint a solid white line both directions. He also suggested a city ordinance about talking and texting on cell phones.

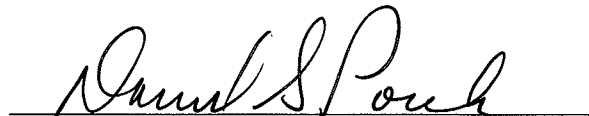
Chief Duber thanked everyone who attended the community policing meeting last Wednesday. Chief Duber will try to have another meeting in September. Chief Duber said to please contact the police department if you see something. Do not wait for these ward meetings or Council meetings to report problems. By the time an issue gets to the Chief, too much time has gone by and he cannot do anything about many issues after the occurrence. There are also brochures available on animal control and what to expect from dispatchers when you call the police. A mini police station will be located at the gray building at the Square during festivals. Sign-up forms for code read and a police email distribution list also available.

Inquiry from audience on efforts of filling vacancies in downtown Bedford. Mr. Mallis responded that he regularly contacts chain businesses. He also receives calls from small business owners. A 1950's style eatery will soon be opening up at Cyber Pete's. He had some interest in a storefront across the street from Cyber Pete's for a dress shop. The City offers different programs. Through the Small Business Association (SBA), there is loan assistance. The County offers storefront grants.

Mayor Pocek introduced C. Ellen Connally, Bedford's County Council representative. Mrs. Connally gave a brief presentation on what the County Council is working on.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 P.M.

  
Clerk of Council Pro-Tem

  
Mayor – President of Council